

Guv: Inspect Murray's mines

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Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. asked federal officials Tuesday to conduct additional inspections of two other coal mines owned by Crandall Canyon mine owner Robert Murray.

Huntsman asked MSHA administrator Richard Stickler to conduct the additional reviews of the Murray mines and believes the request will be honored, a spokeswoman said.

"These additional inspections are only the beginning of a larger investigation that needs to be conducted in Utah's deep mines to secure safety for our miners," Huntsman said in a statement. "We must do all we can, at every level, to be prepared for a catastrophe like this one. This is the least we can do to ensure that the lives lost have not been in vain."

Spokeswoman Lisa Roskelley said the governor does not expect to limit the inspections to Murray's mines, but sees it as a starting point. Huntsman has been assured by Stickler that the state will have a role in the investigation into the Aug. 6 cave-in at the Crandall Canyon mine that trapped six miners and the subsequent burst that killed three rescuers and injured six others.

In the coming weeks, Huntsman expects to appoint a state committee to recommend steps the state can take to ensure the safety of Utah miners. Huntsman has said he would be interested in the state playing a greater role in regulating mine safety. Currently the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining regulates only surface activities at mines.

- Robert Gehrke